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ABSTRACT

Studies of job satisfaction among community college faculty use a variety of theoretical constructs and measure widely different dimensions of satisfaction. Research on the effects of working conditions on faculty attitudes has shown consistently that interaction with students and peers and privacy within the classroom are major sources of satisfaction, while faculty are less satisfied with the time available to them to prepare for class or keep up to date in their field, the lack of recognition for professional growth, and the lack of support for instruction. Other researchers have focused on the intrinsic variables affecting job satisfaction, showing how age, commitment to a community college career, and the emotional responses of faculty relate to work attitudes. Most researchers are concerned with utilizing their findings to effect changes in the institutional environment that will prevent faculty stagnation and burnout and enhance creativity and vitality. Recommendations include encouraging diversity in faculty work tasks and the skills used to accomplish them, hiring faculty for 12 rather than 9 months, restructuring sabbaticals to promote retraining, and adjusting salaries and bonuses to recognize teaching excellence in tangible ways. (MDB)

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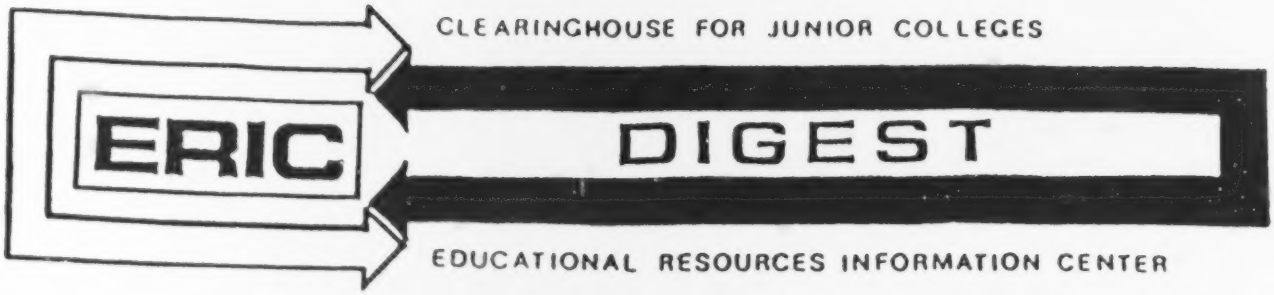


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# JOB SATISFACTION AMONG COMMUNITY COLLEGE FACULTY

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CLEARINGHOUSE FOR JUNIOR COLLEGES

ERIC DIGEST

EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER

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# JOB SATISFACTION AMONG COMMUNITY COLLEGE FACULTY

Studies of community college instructors' job satisfaction have been conducted since the early 1900's, using a variety of theoretical constructs and measuring widely different dimensions of satisfaction. One group of studies has looked at the effects of personality variables and personal characteristics on job satisfaction, while another group has investigated working conditions and specific work activities as causes of teacher burnout and job dissatisfaction. In his review of five national and regional studies of job satisfaction, Friedlander (1978) concludes that measures of general job satisfaction are more accurate predictors of faculty members' desire to remain at their job than measures of attitudes toward working conditions.

Overall job satisfaction has been measured through answers to such questions as "How do you view your job? Delighted? Pleased? Satisfied? Equally satisfied and dissatisfied? Dissatisfied? Unhappy? Terrible?" (Filan, Okun, Witter, 1978); and "In five years how attractive would you find remaining in your present position? How attractive would you find a faculty position at another two-year college? at a four-year college?" (Friedlander, 1978). Ratings of global or general facets of working conditions such as relations with colleagues, students, and administrators (Friedlander, 1978) have also been used to assess overall satisfaction. Studies that use such measures show that community college faculty are generally quite satisfied with their careers and plan to teach at a community college for some time to come. Riday, Bingham, and Harvey (1984-85) found that community college faculty in Los Angeles County found their work more satisfying and fulfilling than high school instructors or four-year college faculty.

On the other hand, studies of faculty satisfaction with specific instructional and non-instructional job responsibilities and working conditions have shown some consistent and widespread patterns of both satisfaction and dissatisfaction.

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**Working Conditions and Job Satisfaction**

Studies of the effects of working conditions on faculty attitudes have looked at numerous aspects of the community college environment. Consistently, these studies have shown that interaction with students and peers and privacy within the classroom have been major sources of satisfaction. Friedlander (1978) also found that autonomy; freedom to choose textbooks, programs, and media; opportunities to be creative; and the two-year college work environment in general enhanced satisfication. Filan, Okun, and Witter (1986) revealed that intrinsic work motivations, financial rewards, good supervision, and opportunities for skill enhancement are all positively correlated with job satisfaction.

Less satisfying features of the workplace have been identified as:

- Lack of time to adequately prepare for class or keep up to date with the field, to develop innovative teaching methods or to do a proper job with individual students (Friedlander, 1978; Hutton and Jobe 1985)

- Lack of recognition or support for professional growth through writing, advanced study, and recognition and release time for professional development (Hutton and Jobe, 1985)

- Lack of support for instruction (e.g., the need for better support services, instructional media and materials) by the governing board and administrators (Hutton and Jobe, 1985)

- Poor facilities and equipment, inadequate parking, and lack of building security (Hutton and Jobe, 1985; and Diener, 1985)

- Little voice in college decision making (Clagett, 1980; Cohen and Brawer, 1982)

- Routinization of teaching content, teaching schedule, instructional methods, professional roles, and interactions with students (Harnish and Creamer, 1985-86; Altshuler and Richter, 1985)

- Inflexible or heavy teaching schedules, lack of recognition, low salaries, and high levels of bureaucracy and red tape (Diener, 1985)

- Working with unappreciative, unmotivated, or underprepared students (Friedlander, 1978; Cohen and Brawer, 1982; Clagett, 1980)

- Teacher evaluation processes (Clagett, 1980; Collins, 1986)

## The Effects of Personality and Personal Characteristics

Another group of researchers, including Cohen and Brawer (1982), Caldwell (1986), Harnish and Creamer (1985-86), and Hill (1986) has focused their research on intrinsic variables affecting job satisfaction. Their findings suggest that satisfaction is associated with:

Age. Cohen and Brawer have found that faculty members in their 20's and 30's are less satisfied, those in their early 40's have experienced stresses associated with middle-age transitions, and those over 55 years of age have a high level of satisfaction.

Commitment to a Community College Career. Caldwell has found the highest levels of satisfaction among faculty members who anticipate staying at a community college throughout their career and either create a sense of career movement by purposefully seeking out new activities and opportunities within the college or enjoy the predictable aspects of their work and look for change outside of the college.

Job Affect. Harnish and Creamer have focused on the feelings or emotional responses of faculty members toward the various aspects of their work, and developed a typology of four job-involvement attitude patterns associated with the Job Involved, Critics, Psychic Dropouts, and Clock-Punchers. Job-Involved faculty and Clock-Punchers tend to rank highest in job satisfaction.

Other Variables. Filan, Okun, and Witter (1986) have found job satisfaction related to such psychological variables as internal goal setting, reality perception, personal responsibility, self-confidence, and internal control. Harnish and Creamer underscore the significance of the career and personal needs, and priorities of faculty at different times in their lives; needs for variety, challenge, and outside professional stimulation, renewal, and recognition; and changing priorities related to career/life stages.

## Maintaining Faculty Vitality

Most institutional researchers of faculty job satisfaction are concerned with utilizing their findings to effect changes in the institutional environment that will prevent faculty stagnation and burnout and enhance faculty creativity and vitality.

Harnish and Creamer (1985-86) suggest that routinization in teaching can be minimized by "encouraging diversity in faculty work tasks and the skills used to accomplish them, introducing variety into the frequency and types of teaching opportunities, and supporting an expanded definition of the role of faculty that provides more rewards for a broader range of professional accomplishments" (p. 39).

Highlighting the efforts of Miami-Dade Community College, Altshuler and Richter (1985) underscore the value of:

- hiring teachers for a full year, making summers available for reduced teaching loads, creative or research projects, and a paid vacation every two or three years

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- restructuring sabbaticals so that faculty can take courses to retrain for teaching in other disciplines
- adjusting salaries and bonuses to recognize teaching excellence in tangible ways
- avoiding a static curriculum and implementing a variety of instructional strategies in the classroom
- encouraging classroom visitations by chairpersons and peers
- ensuring consistency in teacher-administrator relations.

Clagett's (1980) research with a group of community college faculty involved in a burnout and stress reduction workshop resulted in the following recommendations:

- strict enforcement of prerequisites and realistic placement of students into courses for which they are properly prepared
- college-wide agreement on the promotion of academic excellence and the maintenance of high standards
- agreement on the responsibilities students must assume for successful learning
- improved communication between faculty and administrators regarding fiscal and managerial decisions.

Research suggests that job satisfaction relates both to the individual and the work setting. Because various approaches may be assessing different dimensions of satisfaction, an individual's responses to one set of questions may lead to very different conclusions than the same person's responses to another set of questions. Decision makers should be particularly cautious about the questions they ask and their relationship to the variables they wish to predict and the changes they desire to effect.

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